



The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory

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The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory

About the Journal

The *Journal of Throssel Hole Priory* is published quarterly as a service to all who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. The articles we publish are both practical and relevant to daily life and are a means by which we can all share our understanding and experience of training. We therefore welcome contributions of letters and articles about any aspect of Buddhist training. We are also glad to receive any line drawings or photographs that you think may be suitable and will photocopy well. Opinions expressed in the articles are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Abbot, Throssel Hole Priory or the editor. The *Journal* costs £8 per annum, if you wish to subscribe, please address your envelope to the *Journal* and make your cheque payable to *Throssel Hole Priory* (there is a subscription form on the inside back page).

PLEASE NOTE. We would like to clarify our use of the word 'He' when referring to the 'Eternal,' the 'Cosmic Buddha,' the 'Dharmakaya,' 'Avalokiteshwara Bodhisattva' etc. Whenever 'He' is used, understand that what is meant is 'He/She/It.' We simplify our usage in this way so that the continuity of the articles is not repeatedly broken up by the form 'He/She/It,' and also because we have not yet found another word which conveys the complete meaning.

About the Priory

THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition (Sōtō Zen). It is affiliated with Shasta Abbey whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. Shasta Abbey is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and is located in Mt. Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and follow the teaching and example of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

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AMITABHA BUDDHA:The Buddha of Immeasurable Life of the Western Pure Land. Amitabha Buddha is revered as an aspect of the Cosmic Buddha which extends a wholehearted acceptance and welcome to the trainee in life as well as in death. Amitabha Buddha points to the love, compassion and wisdom to be found within ourselves and all beings when we look with the eyes of faith. Although Shakyamuni Buddha is the usual central figure enshrined in temples of the Serene Reflection Meditation School, representations of Amitabha Buddha are often used to remind us of the peace and joy to be found in the open heart of meditation.



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Abbess, M.O.B.C.

The Sandōkai

[What follows is an edited version of lectures given by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett to all monks in September, 1981. The lectures were first published in Zen Training (Shasta Abbey, 1982) which is presently out-of-print. The glossary to Zen is Eternal Life has information about the origin of these two scriptures. The first lecture on the Sandōkai is reprinted in this issue.]

Homage to the Buddha,
Homage to the Dharma,
Homage to the Sangha.

From West to East, unseen, flowed out the Mind
Of India's greatest Sage and, to the source
Kept true as an unsullied stream is clear.

The very first words uttered in Morning Service are those of certainty, the certainty of the flowing out from the Absolute, the flowing out from the Cosmic Buddha from the far past to the present time. It is a statement of certainty and faith. India's greatest Sage, Shakyamuni, was just one of the conduits, or pipes.... This statement of faith is made every morning immediately after meditation in the Zendō. After experiencing the flowing of the water during one's meditation one can *know*, in all certainty, that one is part of the pipe - by feeling the water itself, knowing it, drinking it, living it. The whole of the *Sandōkai* is a statement of certainty which helps us to grow our faith.

Although by wit and dullness the True Way
Is varied, yet it has no Patriarch
Of south or north.

Some experience the True Way clearly, visibly. They see, or hear, or they know. Others just occasionally feel the water. Although the senses may be bright or dull, although they may be clever at explaining it, or not so clever (Dōgen once pointed out that there was an old cook who mumbled like an ox but knew the Truth better than anyone he had met), yet neither the bright nor the dull is the *Patriarch of south or north*, the only true Patriarch being That Which Is, that which flows through all of them. One should not look at a monk and say, "I don't think he knows much," or, "I think he's wonderful, look how much he knows." One should not do these things; one's purpose is to *know* the Eternal.... We might as well use *do not set up your own standards* as a refrain after each line of this scripture.

Here born, we clutch at things
And then compound delusion, later on,
By following ideals; each sense gate and
*Its object all together enter thus
In mutual relations and yet stand
Apart in a uniqueness of their own,
Depending and yet non-depending both.

[At the asterisk * the gong is struck to mark the incense offering; also to accent important parts of the scripture.]

We are sensitive to the Cosmic Buddha as babies, but we are carefully educated out of that sensitivity. Children, by the age of seven, very sadly have decided to go the way of the world; they do not know what else to do. If they do not go this way, they are going to be regarded as weird; and if they do go along, they know that they have "lost" something. Throughout their lives they search for that which has been "lost." *The Secret of the Golden Flower*¹ speaks of the beautiful place being torn, and heaven and earth becoming separated. The child was in its secret place within, untorn, until the world and its parents and teachers got at it. One should not think of this as a vindictive or jealous act on the part of teachers and parents; it was done to them and they know no better. The purpose of a

Buddhist layman is to learn how *not* to do this to one's children, to prevent the continuation of suffering by making sure that one's own children are not torn from the Eternal. So we are striving to get back to the Cosmic Buddha, but all we can come up with are ideals. We have "Love and Light."² We try to become God. By attempting to deal with what we regard as evil we concern ourselves with what is the prerogative of the Cosmic Buddha, of the Eternal. Because we have been torn from the Eternal we try to make the Eternal into what we ourselves would like to be, and have the rest of the world be. So one must get rid of ideals, one must throw one's hands in the air and cry, "I am not God. I cannot put the world to rights. Help me!" In crying for help we are once again reunited with the Eternal....It does not mean that ideals are wrong. It means that they can mislead us as to what really is.

The sense-gates know what they like; they know what they dislike - they do not know that within both the liked and the disliked there is That Which Is beyond both; that one can stand in that place and neither the liked nor the disliked will affect one....It is possible to stand with your feet in hell and know that the encircling hands and the flames are the cool petals and the water of the lotus blossom. You can make these things into the cool water, or the flames (as you move out of the Eternal). You can have it either way, or you can have it beyond both. These things can depend upon each other to show the differences between themselves, or they can be seen to be the shadows they really are - one *can* know the reality within them. Most people seek love in its earthly form, not knowing that the essence of love far transcends the earthly state. When one truly knows this, earthly love becomes as dross. At a gourmet restaurant, one can have one's tastes titillated with the most exquisite dishes, but once one has tasted the Water of the Spirit no food whatsoever has savour; there is nothing more delicious, more refreshing, or more cooling. It is through knowing what we like and what we dislike that we find the essence of both. It is through the varying tastes that we find the basic taste, which is the essence of the Cosmic Buddha, That Which Is. It is through love and non-love that we find true love. It is through ugly sights and beautiful sights that we find true sight. Do not look down upon the senses. Use them as tools through which one may come to know the Ultimate.

In form and feel component things are seen
To differ deeply; thus are voices, in
Inherent isolation, soft or harsh.
Such words as high and middle darkness
match;
Light separates the murky from the pure;

Sounds are loud or soft - we know what we prefer, until finally we love silence. Then we may hear the still, small Voice of the Cosmic Buddha which was silenced by our parents and teachers and our own foolishness in going along with them. Most people spend more time in trying to forgive themselves for going along in this way than I care to think about. There is no point in worrying about all this, it is past, it is done. What matters is the going on, going on, going on, allowing the Water of the Spirit to flow *from West to East unseen*. Within all these discriminating statements, the soft or harsh, high and middle, the murky and the pure, is to be found the Essence, if only we look hard enough. The lotus blossom can be seen blooming in hell with the flowers as cool water; the lotus blossom can stand in that water with the flames all around, and no harm will come to it. *Just as the lotus blossom is not wetted by the water that surrounds it*, the water that surrounds it is not consumed by the flames nor, when the flames surround its stalk, is the lotus blossom damaged. There is damage only if one moves from the centre. One can find this centre by becoming more and more sensitive, quieter, by preferring the less noisy to the noisy, the more and more exquisite to the less exquisite. But unless you have compared them it is impossible to know that you want neither; it is impossible to know that heaven is more dangerous than hell unless you *know* heaven.

The properties of the four elements
Together draw just as a child returns
Unto its mother. Lo! The heat of fire,
The moving wind, the water wet, the earth
All solid; eyes to see, sounds heard and smells;
Upon the tongue the sour, salty taste.

As we penetrate these things, as we become more sensitive to them, we draw more and more into the centre. We are as a child returning to its mother, its True Mother being the state it was in

before it was ruined and torn from that beautiful, sensitive place where nothing can harm it, where neither death nor life is of importance because there one knows true life. One knows which life is as a shadow and which is the reality. Do not get stuck with heaven, with the exquisite and the beautiful tastes. You must go beyond all that. If you get stuck in sensitivity you will become a painfully boring and annoying person. The coarser form of this is "Love and Light." You must go on beyond that exquisite sensitivity to find the Cosmic Buddha in both the coarseness and the dark. Thus we can say *in darkness there is light and in light there is darkness*. The lotus blossom grows up from the mud, but it does not pull its roots out of the mud, for the Cosmic Buddha is found in the mud just as much as He is found in heaven....One has to return to the Source to find that the source of the Yellow River does not necessarily have to be pure.

And yet, in each related thing, as leaves
Grow from the roots, end and beginning here
Return unto the source and "high" and "low"
Are used respectively. Within all light
Is darkness but explained it cannot be
By darkness that one-sided is alone.
In darkness there is light but, here again,
By light one-sided it is not explained.

Nirvana is here and now, in this very lifetime, and in eternity. But do not get stuck with light: "Oh, I am so holy, I am full of light." Do not think, because there is darkness within you, you are forever doomed to darkness. The Essence flows through both and always has.

*Light goes with darkness as the sequence does
Of steps in walking; all things herein have
Inherent, great potentiality,
Both function, rest, reside within.

Because this line is so important the gong is struck. It is actually light and darkness *within each step*, not one after the other. It is because light and darkness are within each step that there is this inherent, great potentiality in both the light and the dark. No matter how dark the karma within you may seem, no matter how light, know that the essence of both is in fact identical. Thus there is the great potentiality for the end and the beginning to

come together at the Source, and for both function and rest to reside within.

Lo! With

The Ideal comes the actual, like a box
All with its lid; Lo! With the ideal comes
The actual, like two arrows in mid-air
That meet.

Evil and good come together in this place, but do not *try* to make two arrows meet in mid-air, for if you do you will again be usurping the position of the Cosmic Buddha. To try constantly to do good is to usurp the power of God. Equally, to try to do good by taking on the "demons" of this life is also to usurp His power. *To do good; to do evil* - one has to find the essence within them and stand in that place. When "demons" seem to attack, one must ask for help, and when angels seem to bless, not become overjoyed and spiritually proud. In other words, one needs to cry, "Help!" in both situations. It is not you who make the arrows meet in mid-air; your actions allow the arrows to meet in mid-air. This is not to turn you into something that just sits and does nothing, for that is just as bad as trying to do too much. One must act, and when one does one must be willing to take the consequences of that action. One must always know that it is not one's self that does anything.

You must do that which is true for yourself. I personally know only one way, the perfection of Zen. Every philosopher knows that in perfection there is an ending, a going on beyond both good and evil, beyond all opposites, to that which lies beyond. But an ending does not necessarily have to be negative. The *MU* [emptiness] of the Scripture of Great Wisdom is by far the biggest, fullest emptiness you will ever bump into.³ This is my way.

Completely understand herein

*The basic Truth within these words; Lo! Hear!
Set up not your own standards. If, from your
Experience of the senses, basic Truth
You do not know, how can you ever find
The path that certain is, no matter how
Far distant you may walk?

Set up not your own standards. Keep going on, and on, and on, always staying still within the Water of the Spirit, always going on beyond the opposites, getting caught in neither, and knowing that they hide within each other. If you do not become deeply sensitive and go on beyond to find the Source, and go on beyond that to find the Source in both the sensitive and the insensitive, you will never be able to look at the drunk outside the temple gate and know that he possesses the Buddha Nature - and still say no to his entering the monastery until he is sober.

As you walk on

Distinctions between near and far are lost
And, should you lost become, there will arise
Obstructing mountains and great rivers. This
I offer to the seeker of Great Truth,
Do not waste time.

The distinctions between good and evil, male and female, and the like, become lost in time, if one becomes sensitive enough to the real, true spiritual Essence. This is true of all things. If you get involved in the differences between the man and the woman, or between the different dishes of food, or the sounds and smells, you will be in trouble. These *mountains and rivers* are metaphorically mountains and rivers. It will seem impossible for you to go on, because of the size of those things your standards and imagination have set up. You will have created a non-existent mountain and river by clinging to your own opinions and ideals; thus creating for yourself a barrier which prevents the pipe from giving forth the life-giving and life-sustaining Water of the Spirit. If you do not find the Lord in the darkness, there will always be you, the Cosmic Buddha, and darkness.... You must find the Eternal within the darkness just as much as you find it within the light. This is the importance of the *Sandōkai*.

If you have not understood fully the experience of the senses, and become truly sensitive to them, how can you find the path? Your ideals will then come up again: "Oh, I will go off and become a paramedic, or a this or a that, then I'll be able to follow my ideals." You can do these things, and still go off, provided you know where you are going, and know the road; provided you know you must get to that sensitive state where there is nothing but

you and the Cosmic Buddha... Only then can you go back and do those things with the right attitude of mind, and not get caught up in *doing good*, "I am going to deal with wickedness and evil; I am going to usurp the position of God." When you know the Essence, then you can really do something, for it will not be you that is doing the doing. It will be that which lives within you that does the doing. The certainty comes at the beginning of this scripture, then comes its understanding. You must understand this in every respect. *Study in detail*, says Dōgen. Study this scripture in great detail. Do not leave anything out. Find That Which Is - and find It in all things.

This

I offer to the seeker of Great Truth,
Do not waste time.

Notes

1. Richard Wilhelm & Cary F. Baynes, trans., *Secret of the Golden Flower: a Chinese Book of Life* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1947).
2. The "Love and Light" heresy attempts to find the source of love and compassion in human relationships and feelings, instead of recognizing the true Source, the Cosmic Buddha. It mistakes transitory "experiences" and emotions for genuine spirituality. - ed.
3. It would be more accurate to say that the word "sunyata" (Mu) has in the West been translated as "voidness" or "emptiness." These words have a negative connotation and do not convey the full meaning of the term. A more positive and helpful translation is "purity" or "the Immaculacy of Nothingness."

A Ninety Day Retreat.
January 1st to March 31st 1996

There are still a few places left on the ninety day retreat run by Rev. Daishin. Please apply to him directly if you are interested.

Asking in Meditation

Rev. Daishin Morgan

*"Ask the Lord at all times before you do anything whatsoever."*¹

"Asking for the Teaching in meditation is the living expression of our direct connection to the Buddha Nature."

Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha is the foundation of the practice of Buddhism. The Three Treasures include the Buddha as human teacher, the Dharma as the teaching of the Buddha and the Sangha as those who follow the Buddha's Teaching. The essence of all the Three Treasures is the Buddha Nature which is the true nature of all things, and so it is ultimately to the Buddha Nature that we go for Refuge. Taking Refuge means letting go of clinging to a separate or egotistical self and basing one's actions upon the Three Treasures. Going for Refuge is expressed by keeping the Precepts of the Buddha, which are the description of enlightened action formulated as the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Great Precepts. All of this is a means of pointing at a living Truth, that there is a vital luminosity at the heart of Buddhism which we call the Unborn, Undying and Unchanging. If we try to make this vital Truth into a god or into any objective thing we cover It with illusion for It cannot be grasped in any way. The only approach to It is to let go of taking refuge in "me and mine" and take refuge in the Three Treasures instead, making Them the guide of our lives so that every act is in accord with Them. Asking for the Teaching in meditation is the living expression of our direct connection to the Buddha Nature.

One does not need to form a conception of who or what is being asked. It is enough that one asks as an expression of the willingness to let go of greed and fear and to change one's direction. Without this willingness there can be no transformation and therefore no liberation from suffering. The meaning of asking is expressed in the act of bowing when the forehead is placed on the floor and the hands raised palm upwards in a gesture of offering oneself into the vital luminosity of the Three Treasures.

I have found it useful, when presented with a possibility I need to consider, to reflect on whether I am willing to do it and willing not to do it. If there is confusion or uncertainty, then I find it very helpful to resolve to do it, and see what resistance or attachment that brings up. I then resolve not to do it and see what that brings. In this way I come to see more clearly what the "me and mine" is in this situation. Then the \$64,000 question, am I prepared to do what is in accord with Buddha Nature or must I do what I want? I then ask the question in meditation, and if I wish to follow the Buddha Nature I can hear the answer. Anything less than a wholehearted willingness to follow the Buddha Nature will result in my going round in endless circles following my own fears and desires. The asking is like letting the question float on the pool of stillness that is at the heart of meditation. One must let go of it to let it float and one must be willing for it to take any direction.

How is the answer received? It is sometimes called the voice of the Lord or the voice of the heart. However, I do not look for a "voice" in any literal sense or what I hear will be the product of my confusion. Instead there needs to be a quality of listening that is a deep sensitivity to the Buddha Nature. Does my intended action cast a shadow that causes a separation? Is there a sense of disharmony arising, a subtle disquiet, a hardening? If so I need to keep listening very carefully and identify the cause. It probably means I should not do it,

but I have found that acting in accord with the Teaching that arises does not always feel pleasant. It is too simplistic to think that if I feel good then it is a "Yes" and if I feel bad it is a "No". The true answer lies much deeper than the level of feelings and we need to recognise the emotions as part of the scenery rather than a suitable motivation for action. There are sometimes things we must do that grieve the human self, or which bring up fear, but they are nevertheless right in the deeper sense. There is a sense of being in tune with the Refuge, a sense of it being right, in the way Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett speaks of as being beyond right and wrong. The more sensitive to the Buddha Nature I become - through trusting It, the clearer this "sense" becomes. The answer is beyond words and so it is difficult to describe, and I cannot even say it is beyond words since words can give It expression when the asking expresses a true willingness to take refuge. We need to develop a keen sensitivity through practice. It is neither easy nor simplistic, but once you trust It, it is not difficult.

Many decisions have to be taken rapidly and there is no time for lengthy contemplations. Also, many decisions are minor, and it would be obsessive and impractical to spend half an hour in contemplation before deciding what to do. Nevertheless, apparently minor decisions can accumulate profound suffering, so we need to develop a constant attitude of listening to the Buddha Nature in all that we do, say or think. This is another name for mindfulness.

We should ask, but we should not see ourselves as one who does not know, nor should we think we do know or we will not truly ask. It is necessary to let go of the duality of an unenlightened me and an enlightened Buddha. You must let go of knowing with your head and trust the meditation. There is only the immaculacy of emptiness, the vital luminosity, in which there is no place to stand, no position to take. This only makes sense when we let go of the "me and mine" attitude which is at the heart of clinging. Knowing and not knowing are states of mind that come and go - let them come and go, meanwhile sitting endures without interruption.

Our asking should not arise from a constant state of doubt, a constant looking for something to give us certainty. We must have confidence in our training, cultivate asking/listening and go straight ahead assuming the decision is right while staying tuned to the Buddha Nature, always willing to hear that we should be doing it differently. If I "hear" something within that prompts me to change direction then the only conclusion I can draw is that I need to change direction. It does not necessarily mean I was wrong before, as everything is constantly changing, all that matters is that I go where the Buddha Nature is pointing now. To get caught up in right and wrong is just to invest in the delusion of adequacy and inadequacy which is the obsession of the "me and mine" attitude.

To ask and then to follow the teaching that arises is what we mean when we speak of following the heart. Take care not to imagine that "the Heart" or "The Unborn" or any other idea, has a game plan worked out and all we need to do to know the game plan is to refine the communications gear. There is no game plan. There is no such thing as an Unborn; there is the immaculacy of emptiness, limitless space and infinite potential. There is no fate that we are bound to and even our past karma need not determine our lives. In each moment there is constant change, and our every volitional act changes the kaleidoscope. Do not seek for a secure self that is concrete and has a position. Offer everything into that which has no sign², has no desire and is vital luminosity.

"Take care not to imagine that "the Heart" or "The Unborn" or any other idea, has a game plan worked out and all we need to do to know the game plan is to refine the communications gear. There is no game plan."

The reason I like to call Buddha Nature a vital luminosity is that there is a sense of “light”, and of support and compassion. When we call there is an answer. The answer, like Kanzeon’s³ response, always rises to the occasion, and all it takes to hear it is to truly ask.

“It is essential that we take Refuge in the Sangha, which is the offering of our understanding to others who have experience, so that they too can check within meditation to see if all is well.”

There are the so-called confirmatory signs that can be experienced in meditation, when the Buddha Nature recognises purity of heart and there is a rising up in response. This is known intuitively and it is one of the manifestations of the True Refuge. However, it needs to be handled with great care. To ask in meditation if it is good to do something and then to experience a confirmatory sign, may simply be the confirmation of the sincerity of heart that gave rise to the question. One should nevertheless proceed, but keep that ear tuned to the immaculacy of emptiness so that at the first hint of a change in direction one is ready to respond. The danger here is that the answer one has “heard” becomes the equivalent of the commandment of God and everything must be swept away before it, regardless of the feelings of others. Such mistakes are the result of clinging to knowing something and the abandoning of the listening ear. This can also happen if we expect an objective answer, i.e. that there is someone or something objectively out there to whom the question is addressed. If we try long enough and hard enough to “hear” from our projected source, the mind begins to satisfy our desire and invents an answer. Such false answers can be recognised by the quality of hardness, obduracy and eventually bigotry that surround the person who believes himself to be so chosen.

We cannot afford to cling to being right, but we are all naturally concerned not to go wrong. So long as our asking is not a veiled demand arising from greed or fear, then all will be well. In this it is essential that we take Refuge in the Sangha, which is the offering of our understanding to others who have experience, so that they too can check within meditation to see if all is well. Such humility is its own safeguard. Do not fear, but go ahead and make your decisions and keep an ear open. Do not expect to be perfect for you will make mistakes, but if you cultivate the openness of the listening ear, and the willingness to admit when you get it wrong, then your mistakes will show you how you ignored the Teaching, and you will know more clearly how important it is to ask and then act upon the Teaching.

Upasaka Liu-keng said to Nan-ch’uan, “In my house there is a stone which sits up or lies down. I intend to carve it as a Buddha. Can I do it?” Nan-ch’uan answered, “Yes you can.” Liu-keng asked again, “Can I not do it?” Nan-ch’uan answered, “No, you cannot do it.”⁴ When we ask we must have faith in the answer and act upon it. We may think we are being sincere in asking again, just to make sure, but we may merely be giving expression to our doubts and seeking reassurance. This old kōan resonates with me because I recently learned to do some stone carving. I read books and they were very helpful, but then I had to pick up the chisel and begin.

Notes

1. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, Kyojūkaimon and Commentary, *Serene Reflection Meditation*, (Shasta Abbey Press, 1989), p.71.

2. i.e. there is nothing to grasp.

3. Kanzeon or Avalokiteshwara is the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

4. Nyogen Senzaki, *The Iron Flute*, (Charles E. Tuttle, 1961), p. 20.

The Storm

Joyce Edward

When I was a child, my father used to tell me the story of 'the storm'. It was about woodland animals, in particular about a little rabbit who was frightened of thunderstorms and how his friends helped him get over his fear. This is the story of one such storm, though I didn't know it until the storm was over.

The Dream

For the last eighteen months I had been having a recurring dream. The details differed but the theme was always the same: I had given birth to a baby and was so happy, then somehow the scene would change and I would find that I had neglected the baby without the knowledge of how I came to do it. Each time I awakened distressed. This could not really be about me - we had three children and I had put the best I could manage into my mothering.

The Inner Baby

I was visiting Throssel Hole Priory for the second time. As I was leaving, the guestmaster said she was so glad I had returned. I was moved to tears but not sure why. Next day at home I was meditating and became aware of a story told of my first days of life. I was disturbing the other babies by my crying, so I was placed in a spare operating theatre to cry on my own. Grief welled up for this tiny child and I felt the child was within me - not in the womb, but around the region of the hara. I imagined myself holding this baby in the way I had held and loved my own babies. I cried and felt comforted.

This sensation of an inner baby persisted. Once during morning service at the Priory, I had a strong image that the baby was sitting up, wide-eyed and enthralled at what was going on. I began to use what was happening to this inner baby as a sort of thermometer to test out my feelings of 'rightness' about things I was doing in life and understood it as a symbol of an inner longing for the Truth.

The Black Hole

Over the last six months I have been more and more aware of an enormous black hole of grief within me. It would be triggered easily if my husband disagreed with me or after a difficult day at work. I could cry and sob, but see no bottom to it. I found eating helped and put on a stone in weight. Once in meditation, after too large a meal, I was aware that the inner baby couldn't reach me because it was buried under a mound of food.

The Choking

My husband and I had decided to go to the Ten Precepts Meeting together. I signed up for spiritual counselling and found myself assigned Rev. Daishin. We discussed what was uppermost in my mind, which was NONE of the above things. Rev. Daishin began to talk about being still within the 'little fears' that often arise in meditation. It had not been in my mind to say that I had been experiencing choking sensations when meditating. I was frightened as to what it could be - surely not a 'past karma' memory of being choked? I shivered at the thought.

Meditation began. The choking sensation began. "Be still. Nothing can destroy you!" People were pushing something down my throat. I couldn't stop them. I felt a great rush of fear. It was the spring of 1972 and I was in the operating theatre. I had just miscarried and was undergoing a 'D & C' procedure. They had put the airway down my throat whilst I was paralysed and in the blackness, but still conscious. Hadn't I gotten over all this years ago? Wasn't I the strong one? I knew. Here was my neglected baby coming home to where it had told me it wanted to be. After meditation I told my husband and we agreed to ask for a memorial service for the little lost baby.

Spring Flower

Reverend Phoebe had told us that it would be good to give a name to our little lost baby. In meditation images flowed. It happened in spring time. Outside there are carpets of snowdrops. They are beautiful, fragile, apparently transient. SPRING FLOWER! This is so right. A single snowdrop upon the altar, but planted, not picked - would they let us take it home afterwards and plant it in our garden? My husband feels this is right too. We pass on the details in a note. I am to see Rev. Myōhō tomorrow about the ceremony.

Next day, we are preparing for the ceremony of Contrition - how appropriate. I was cleaning old paint cans in the toolshed when Rev. Myōhō came for me. In the seniors' common room, we began to discuss the memorial ceremony for Spring Flower. She said "Are you sure you only want a single snowdrop? It might not survive. You might be better with a few?"

Something gripped me. "But that's what happened to the baby," I stammered and broke into floods of tears. Rev. Myōhō sat beside me and enfolded me in her arms. I cried into a great darkness, but it was no longer the black hole. It was a vast, warm, womb-like space and I could see without fear, the isolation of our position when we lost our child. Our families did not talk about the event with us - one didn't back then - we already had one

child. Hospital staff told me I should be grateful. The tears kept returning throughout the day and into the next, but I trusted Rev. Myōhō's words when she told me she knew in her heart that the baby loved me, and that a memorial ceremony often helped put our minds at rest by showing us the Truth. My husband was experiencing his grief as well.

The Broken Teddy

In my work I sometimes have to help women who in their past had termination of pregnancies. Their loss and pain felt like my loss and pain. I felt pushed to do something, but what? On my scarf was a glazed dough teddy bear brooch. It had been broken through being put through the washing machine. It was PERFECT. I rushed out, looking for Rev. Myfanwy who was to perform our memorial ceremony. She was up to her wrists in dough in the kitchen. Rev. Fuden said straight away that I could come in and see her. She led me into the corridor and more grief came flooding out - more holding - and again the black hole was replaced with warmth. My feet WERE ON THE GROUND. The broken teddy was for ALL the broken babies. No matter how they 'broke', there was no difference. They were the same. I left for the rehearsal for the Ketchimyaku¹ ceremony and cried floods of tears all the way through. I thought "I'm holding my grief for myself now and it WILL work through."

The Holding

The little altar was clothed in white brocade. The little snowdrop and the broken teddy were right. Although I cried, I knew that this was right, the baby was all right and that there were greater things at work than I could see. Several people told me how moved they were by the altar and the sense of peace around it. During the ceremony, I cried of course and our friends cried too. I had an image that I was getting to hold the baby for a little while. It was clothed in white, but I couldn't see its face. When we sang 'Adoration of the Buddha's Relics', it was like singing a lullaby. Then I knew I had to hand the baby over to the Eternal. As everyone began to leave, I made three bows and in my mind, handed over the child. This was right to do.

The next morning, at morning service, I had an irresistible image of the Buddha on the altar trying to keep a straight face because a little white-clothed child was playing peek-a-boo behind him.

The Storm

Reverend Daishin is lecturing to us about the Kyojūkaimon. He is talking about how the Ten Precepts Retreat can be an emotional week, but still we must let

that pass too, "like a passing cloud". Outrage began to rise in me. The last few days had exhausted me - how could I consider this a passing cloud! That night there was the ceremony of Recognition, and as I struggled with this anger I thought, "I have so much more work to do."

The next morning I got up with the postulants. As everyone else was still in bed, I walked along the cloisters and looked at the sky. It had been a very stormy night. Great clouds were billowing across the sky. When Rev. Daishin talked of clouds, I had thought of little fluffy things in sunny skies, but the sky showed me that clouds take many forms, many sizes and many colours. I remembered my father's story. It taught me not to be afraid of storms. Storms pass. The sun comes out. Other storms will come. The rabbit in the story had animal friends. His storm lasted an afternoon. My storm lasted a bit longer, but it would pass. I thank the Eternal for showing me his compassion and for the monks and lay people at Throssel Hole Priory for being good friends.



Drawing by Joyce Edward's son.

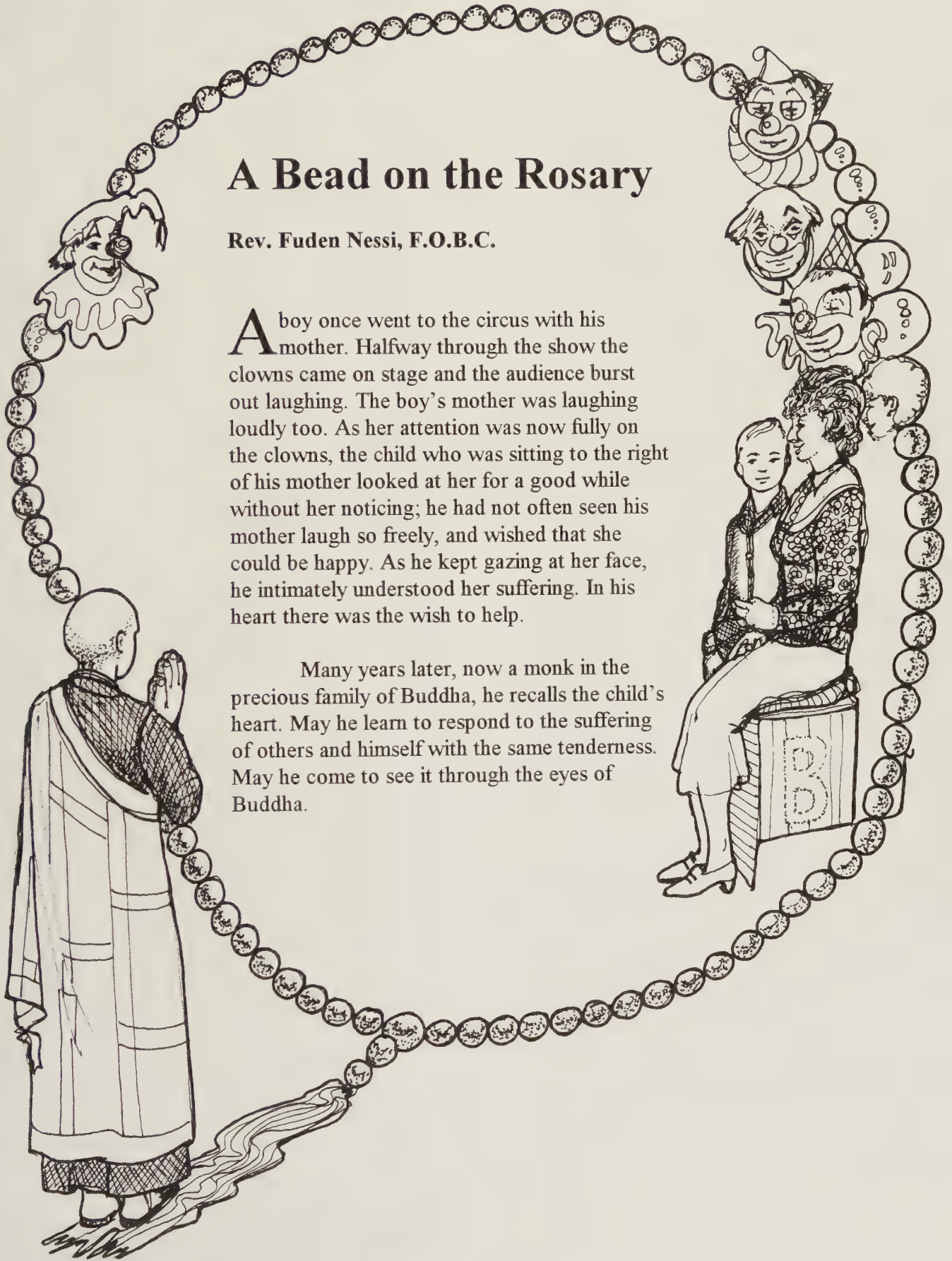
1. The Ketchimyaku ceremony, as well as the ceremony of Contrition and Conversion, and the ceremony of Recognition (mentioned earlier in this article), take place during the Ten Precepts Meeting. They are described in *Serene Reflection Meditation* (Shasta Abbey Press, 1989), p.88-101.

A Bead on the Rosary

Rev. Fuden Nessi, F.O.B.C.

A boy once went to the circus with his mother. Halfway through the show the clowns came on stage and the audience burst out laughing. The boy's mother was laughing loudly too. As her attention was now fully on the clowns, the child who was sitting to the right of his mother looked at her for a good while without her noticing; he had not often seen his mother laugh so freely, and wished that she could be happy. As he kept gazing at her face, he intimately understood her suffering. In his heart there was the wish to help.

Many years later, now a monk in the precious family of Buddha, he recalls the child's heart. May he learn to respond to the suffering of others and himself with the same tenderness. May he come to see it through the eyes of Buddha.



The Broken Brush

Brian Gay, Lay Minister O.B.C.



For several years now, Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō* (The Eye and Treasury of the True Law) has perplexed, intrigued, frustrated and taught me. One fascicle in particular, 'Baige' (Plum Blossoms), has repeatedly drawn me back. Time and again I've found myself reading it, its words coming to mind at various times: "The opening of the plum blossoms is the transmission of the Way - the marrow is passed from one to another." What could it mean?

Later in the teaching Great Master Dōgen writes:

My late master, an ancient Buddha, said, "Our original face possesses no life or death; spring is in the plum blossoms as beautiful as a painted landscape." When we paint a spring landscape we must not only paint willows, or red and green plums and peaches; we must paint spring itself. If you only paint those objects it is not a real painting. It has to be nothing but spring itself... Spring must occur effortlessly in a painting. Plum blossoms are necessary for this kind of painting.¹

I have been painting now for about thirty odd years, and as time has gone by I've got somewhat better at it. I've learned about light and shade, line, perspective, depth and the vast arrays of colour.

Then about eight years ago my best brush began to fail me. It was as if the fine hairs were beginning to take on a life of their own, had become uncoordinated and wanted to go their separate ways. The results were not very good, to say the least. However, I was fortunate and found a skilled and knowledgeable person who repaired the brush and I was on my way again.

Over the last eight years my painting has improved and my technique moved on. People come to see my paintings and I even get invited to do commissions. Sometimes I paint in public. But now there is a problem. My brush has broken again. It is broken quite badly and may be beyond repair. I don't know yet. I have to sit and wait while the experts decide what can and should be done.

The truth is you see, that I'm not really a painter in the ordinary sense of that term. I paint with words, my box of colours is my vocabulary that I have carefully developed over my lifetime and my best brush is my voice. Following the four conditions of time, place, position and degree I have shaped and honed that tool, my voice, to be an effective instrument. It gives light and shade, softness and drive, whispers and roars. I have spent years working with it, learning its potential. The landscapes I have painted, the lectures I gave, the conferences I spoke at and the articles I wrote were about developing people - primarily on mentoring and the mentor-protégé relationship. They were informed by current and past writings on mentoring, the master-disciple relationship on commitment, the craftsman-apprentice model on balancing the tension between development and standards and largely by my own work. Work that is dependent upon speech - discussion, interviewing, debating, networking - talking. The guiding principle for this work of the last seven years has come from 'Baige': "A plum blossom is the observation that 'Above the heavens and throughout the earth, I am the only honoured one' - each thing is the most honoured thing in this world."² However, my best tool for a right livelihood - to serve "each thing" - my voice, is broken. The growths are back on my vocal chords, speech is a high risk activity.

Now I control nothing. Just at the time when mentoring as a concept and practice is rapidly moving up the national agenda I'm wondering if I'm out of the game. And what a game it has been!

But that's just the work side of it - even if I am a workaholic. How do I feel about the fact I may not be able to hug my little white-haired eighty-four-year-old mam and say to her that I love her and tell her what a cracker she is? Must I now give up the word games I so love to play? You can't tell jokes on bits of paper! How will I tell people in pain that I understand and want to help? How will I learn to show to the people for whom I deeply care, just how much I care? Are you allowed to hug a monk in happiness?

Will I only be able to whistle my dogs and not call them by name?

So many questions without answers - yet. Perhaps the final diagnosis will not be so bad. Either way I will have to change my lifestyle. At best a much quieter Brian, at worst a silent one. Rev. Phoebe - an inspirational model if ever there was one - and I, would have to work out some new way to communicate. [Rev. Phoebe is blind. (ed.)]

As I follow my practice in a mass of confusion, frustration, bewilderment and helplessness, but strangely not anger, at least not yet, I am being taught the meaning of bowing, total acceptance and letting go. I currently have no say in my future - all I can do is take Refuge. This is the time of great faith, great doubt and great determination. There is only now, there is only here and there is only this. "Preserve well for you now have; this is all."³ But it is hard, so very hard to bear. I have cried, of course I have, but there is a warmth within all of this. The inevitable questions arise, "Why? ...Why me? ...Why now?" ...and within them the obvious answer, "Why not?" Yet within the midst of all these whirling emotions there remains an immense stillness. Have you noticed that the bluebells are bluer than ever this year and I can't remember the gorse to have been so golden..? "The kōan appears naturally in everyday life."⁴

Perhaps there will be another way to paint.

A year ago I was able to visit the Founder's Hall at Eihei-ji and to bow in gratitude to the life of Dōgen Zenji. Now when I sit in my small zendō and give thanks to the Buddhas and Ancestors, Dōgen Zenji sits with me. We sit together looking at the plum blossoms on the altar and I am reminded of one of his poems:

Speech and silence - absolutely the same:
extremely subtle and profound.

A good remedy was prescribed a long
time ago.

Piercing the sky, embracing the earth
- no end to it.

An immense escarpment glowing with
mysterious light.⁵

Two arrows meeting in mid-air we smile, bow
to each other and give thanks to Tendō Nyōjō who
said:

Clearly illumined, the plum blossoms no longer
cast a shadow. Sometimes it rains, sometimes it
is cloudy; but the plum blossom stands alone in
the past and the present. It lacks nothing!⁶

Now I begin to understand.

Homage to the Buddha,
Homage to the Dharma,
Homage to the Sangha.

Notes

1. Great Master Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol II, translated by Kōsen Nishiyama & John Stevens (Nakayama Shobō. 1977), p. 150.
2. Ibid, p. 147.
3. Great Master Tōzan Ryōkai, *The Most Excellent Mirror Samādhi*, in *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity*, (Shasta Abbey Press, 1990), p. 62.
4. Great Master Dōgen, *Rules for Meditation*, in *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity*, p. 99.
5. Great Master Dōgen, *In Response to Inspector Wang's Poem*, in *Moon in a Dewdrop*, (North Point, 1985), p.218.
6. Great Master Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol II, p.151.

Letter to the Editor

Training with Alzheimer's Disease

I have written an article about training with a relative who suffers from Alzheimer's. I have tried to show how even a difficult situation, when looked at as opportunity, can be beneficial.

I suppose I should open by saying that my mother has Alzheimer's Disease.

Alzheimer's is like Buddhist training. We try to let go of the self to find our true self. With Alzheimer's the self is torn away. The sufferer has no choice but to watch it happen, until they are left with only the moment.

My mother is aware that something is happening which she has no control over, and this makes her anxious. The anxiety can come in the form of anger to herself or others, but the most common form is physical agitation, which she desperately tries to control.

When she becomes anxious, it reminds me of the times when I occupy myself with anything, frightened to just sit there and see what I am frightened of.

When she spots me walking into a room, she smiles and throws her arms around me. To my mother it is the reaction to someone who gives her a sense of security. When this happens, I remember the phrase: "All acceptance, however painful it may be."

I find myself caring for my mother, a situation which is the reverse of the parent-child relationship.

My mother's suffering has shown me how to train in Buddhism, even though she is not aware of it. However difficult the situation, she will continue to teach me.

"At the centre of all things, however it is shown, there is love, compassion and wisdom."

Yours faithfully,

James B. Donegan

West Allendale

By Rawdon Goodier, Lay Minister O.B.C.

1

Familiar circle of moorland
Falling to stone dykes
Great field barn
Scattered farmsteads
Mosaic of grass and rushes

Was it a thrush
heard at the moor's edge
Answering the loud curlew
Until both were quelled
By the storm?

Moorland colours
Bleached by snow
Voices of streams
Merged with the great breath
Sweeping the dale.

2

What is it
That comes thus,
Riding the wind,
Combing the branches,
Scouring the heart's depths?

Shafts of sunlight,
Wood striking wood,
Scent of spring sap,
Taste of fresh rain,
Even memory is now.

In this place
At this time,
As elsewhere and always,
What is it
That thus comes?

3

When even to speak
Is to miss the mark,
What offering
Can be made
Among these hills?

Still,
In this emptiness
Under the scudding clouds,
Among the lichened stones,
And in this moment,
Enfolding every other,
Being is bowing.

Meditation Groups

Announcements

From the Birmingham Group

You are cordially invited to Congregation Day on Sunday 10th September 1995, in Stourbridge, W. Midlands. Please also invite your family, children and any of your friends who would like to join us.

Congregation day is a special time for the lay congregation, family and friends to come together with the monastic community to express our gratitude for the Buddha's teaching - a day when we invite the monks to visit us.

It provides an informal atmosphere for us to meet as a Sangha as well as an opportunity for non-Buddhist friends and family to join with us.

Format

Proceedings will start at 11am and end at 3pm with plenty of time in-between for chat, optional activities for adults and children and a celebration of The Festival of Great Master Bodhidharma. There will be an informal buffet-style lunch and you are requested to bring food and drink to share and also to offer to our monastic guests.

Venue and donations

This years event is hosted by the Birmingham and Telford groups at The Bonded Warehouse, a Grade 11 listed building alongside the Stourbridge Town Arms Canal. Please note that the venue has to be paid for in advance of the day and we therefore request individuals and/or groups to send donations to offset costs.

Donations to be made payable to:

The Birmingham Serene Reflection Group
c/o Chris Taylor, 53 Oak Street, Kingswinford,
West Midlands DY6 9LT.

You are also invited on the day, if you wish, to offer donations to individual monks for them to purchase necessities, and envelopes will be available for that purpose.

How to find Stourbridge...

Stourbridge is within easy reach of the M5 leaving at Junction 4 and taking the A491 into Stourbridge town.

How to find The Bonded Warehouse...

The Bonded Warehouse is within 200 yards of the main Stourbridge ring road leaving at the Wolverhampton exit on the A491 and turning left into Canal Street.

Groups' Weekend

The Groups' Weekend this year will take place from the 29th of September to the 1st of October. Each meditation group is strongly encouraged to be represented at this gathering as it is one of the most important opportunities to meet members of other groups and gain help and encouragement. The theme of this years weekend will be developing spiritual friendship and discovering the Sangha Refuge within the meditation group.

D.T.P. for Meditation Groups

At the last Groups' Weekend there was a discussion about how to make best use of the computer systems which a number of group members had access to. I have produced various items of artwork for the Birmingham Group (poster, letterheads etc.) which I would like to make available to anyone who wishes to use them. The easiest way to do this would seem to be via PAGEPLUS INTRO - a quality DTP package with free registration. The publishers SERIF have generously provided me with 15 copies and manuals which I can supply to interested groups. The program is very intuitive to use, requires 2mb hard drive space to install and will just about run on a 386 PC but is much better on a 486. Note - it is a Windows only program and cannot be run from DOS. I can also supply a disc of sample documents and O.B.C. - related images which have been designed to be output to a laser printer. Phone 01384 280084 if you are interested.

Yours in the Dharma

Chris Taylor

[Note from the Editor: if you produce artwork, posters and letterheads etc. that have the Throssel Hole Priory name or ship and three drums symbol on them, could you please send the Guest Department a copy for our records.]

Priory News

Monastic News

Several monks have received their purple rakhusus and become Teachers of Buddhism this term:

Rev. Hakuun, Rev. Wilfrid, Rev. Gilbert and Rev. Adelin. We offer them our sincerest congratulations.

The Monks' Retreat began with Rev. Fristan's Head Novice's Entry Ceremony on the 18th of April, and on the 21st of April, Gaby Ellis was ordained as Hōun Chandra (Bright Moon in the Dharma Cloud). Richard Hall (from Kent) entered as a postulant on Wednesday the 3rd of May. We are very pleased to welcome Rev. Chandra into the monastic community and would like to wish all of the above trainees success in their continuing practice.

We have been delighted to act as host to a variety of guests from our own Dharma family and other Buddhist Schools. Ven. Ratanajoti a Sri-Lankan monk from the East Midlands Vihara visited the monastery for two days in April. In May, Rev. Meian from Shasta Abbey stayed at the Priory for a few days, while on a visit to relatives in England.

Sister Thanasati and two anagarikas from Amaravati, Irene and Sujata, stayed overnight at the Priory and joined in with morning service and community tea. They were walking through the area as part of their monastic practice.

On the 30th of May we had a visit from Rev. Kanko Takeda, a priest of the Pure Land school and his wife. Together they run the Shintoku Temple in Tokyo. They came with fifteen Japanese lay members of their congregation. Rev. Daishin gave a short talk and a brief discussion on the Dharma followed. Rev. Takeda said that in his teaching you obey the Buddha's Enlightenment. When quizzed on how you do this, he said, "By listening." We would like to thank our Japanese guests for their exquisite gifts of incense, traditional Japanese rice sweets and tea.

Ceremonies

In April we celebrated the Festival of Manjushri Bodhisattva. In our school we see Manjushri as the Bodhisattva

who is the embodiment of wisdom. However, in the talk that followed the ceremony, it was explained how the two aspects of wisdom and compassion are both apparent in the Litany describing Manjushri's virtues: "Now, in the presence of the entire assembly, I bring forth Bodhichitta for the sake of all sentient beings. I vow to involve myself in samsara countless times: to bring great boons to living beings until the end of the future." (From the *Litany of Manjushri Bodhisattva*).

Bright sunny weather greeted the families who came to the Family Weekend at the beginning of May. Seventeen

children and young people came to join in a range of activities including decorating traditional elephant biscuits, making lotus napkins and Wesak greeting cards, cleaning up the garden and helping to create a page for the *Journal* (see pages 18-19). The joyous celebration of the Festival of the Buddha's Birth on Sunday May the 7th was attended by 29 children and for lunch the largest meal count since the Priory has begun was recorded: 120 total (including monks). The Buddha's Birth was also celebrated at HM Frankland Prison as part of 'Buddha Day', with the help of two monks from the Priory. 'Buddha Day' is a day set aside by the authorities for Buddhist prisoners to remember the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha.

Outside events

In the last three months monks from the Priory have been invited to give public talks and lead retreats at several towns and cities in England and Scotland. These included Liverpool, Sheffield, Norwich, Telford, Preston, Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

We have had visits from groups of students from several schools in the North-East recently. In March a party of 'A' level students from Hirst School in Ashington came for a tour and class, and in April we had visits from a school in Hartlepool and from one in Seahouses. Our teachers' courses are still in demand: on the 25th of April we held a teachers' course at Darlington and another course was held at the Priory in early June.

Several monks from the Priory stayed at Amaravati for a Network of Buddhist Organisations (N.B.O.) conference in early June. Twenty-nine Buddhist groups were represented at the conference which took as its theme the Teacher/Student relationship. Rev. Myfanwy spoke on the experience of being a teacher and a student, and Rev. Daishin gave a presentation on the ethics of the Teacher/Student relationship. Rev. Fuden and Rev. Baldwin helped with the catering for the conference.

Funerals & Memorials

In April two monks went to Newcastle Crematorium to do a ceremony for Miyuki Jacobsen, who had died in an accident.

Rev. Myfanwy was the celebrant for a memorial for her father Dick McCorry, on the 4th of May. A memorial ceremony was held for Kenneth Crawford on April the 5th. His ashes were interred in the cemetery at the Priory on the same day.

Building News

We hope to be moving into the new kitchen area of the Hall of Pure Offerings sometime this summer. In January we were aghast to find that a section of the outside wall of Myrtle Bank barn had begun to collapse.

We immediately put up 'acro' props (strong steel supports) to hold the roof up and propped up the wall. The Building Inspector was asked to check it over and reported that the roof could be saved but one wall needed to be rebuilt. In short, we have used this opportunity to get planning permission to convert the barn into monks' rooms and work will start on rebuilding the wall in July.

Alms Bowl

Donations of toiletries and office stationery supplies will be accepted gratefully. A large size refrigerator for use in the kitchen would be greatly appreciated.

In Gratitude

We are very grateful for a large donation of paint (approx. 400 litres), which is being used in the Hall of Pure Offerings. We would also like to thank J.B.S. Northern for their advice on spin dryers. We have been given large amounts of photocopying paper recently, and we would like to express our thanks for this donation which helps us greatly in producing the *Journal* and other publicity. Danka Images UK, a photocopier supplier, has also aided our publicity efforts by offering photocopier supplies to charities at a discount.

A sink and marble surface top that have been donated for the new kitchen will be put to good use in the Hall of Pure Offerings. The very thoughtful donations of electric hand mixers, as well as bread and cheese slicers for the kitchen are greatly appreciated. Also, many thanks for the food donations we have had over the last few months.

Reading Buddhist Priory News

We are pleased to announce that building work is currently in progress on the new extension. By the end of June, the outer shell should be finished and the existing house reroofed and repointed. The Priory is extremely grateful for all the contributions that have been received towards this project. After the work on the outer shell is finished, we will be saving up for the third and final stage - the interior work. Although the extension will look complete from the outside, there will still be much work to be done before we can move in. Any contributions towards completing the project, either financially or in time and expertise, would be gladly received.

Our publicity leaflet was produced in March; if anybody would like to put some in public places around their home or workplace, please let the Prior know. Many thanks to all those people who have been involved in its production.

On the afternoon of 11th May, 10 students and their tutor from Newbold College in Bracknell visited the Priory to find out about the practice of Buddhism, bringing generous offerings of food for the kitchen.

Ceremonies

The Festival of the Buddha's Birth was again celebrated at the Chaplaincy Centre of the University of the West of England in Bristol on May 7th. Forty people, including seven children and two babies attended the day, which provided a good opportunity for the congregation in the south to meet with their fellow Sangha members. Our thanks goes to Brian Gay for organising the day and to all those people who helped in any way. On the morning of the same day Rev. Raymond did an animal ordination for Avril Furneaux's cat, Thea.

Outside events

On March the 8th, Rev. Raymond visited Uffington Primary School in Oxfordshire, giving talks to the three classes which make up the school, followed by an assembly. Two days later, Rev. Raymond gave a talk to 60 pupils from year ten at Deneffield School in Tilehurst, Reading.

The Prior visited King Alfred's college in Winchester on March 24th, giving a talk to first year students and answering their many questions. On the evening of 30th March, Rev. Raymond gave a public talk in Chichester at the Quaker Meeting House to an audience of 30 people. On May 13th, the Prior visited Turvey Abbey near Bedford to give a talk on Buddhism to the participants of a Christian/Buddhist retreat.

In Gratitude

We would like to thank all those people who have contributed their training, money, time and energy to the Priory, and to those who donated the large amounts of food and other items received. Thankyou.

Alms Bowl

The Priory is looking for a paper-cutting guillotine for the office and a tape recorder for the recording of lectures and talks. Practical help in the daily running and maintenance of the Priory is always greatly appreciated.

The Young Person's Page

Drawings by Sam Kirwan
Laura Gittins and Abi Yeo

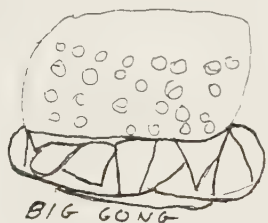
Family Weekend Project

I suggested a theme for a page for the Journal and we walked around the Monastery doing drawings and taking notes. Abi & Laura headed towards the pond garden and without any prompting started drawing the Avalokiteshwara statue. Sam was eager to get off and we found him later sitting in the

Achalanatha shrine. Laura also drew the dawn drum together with its dragon. We hoped to come back and design the page on the computer, but when we got back to the office there was no power! So it was back to the drawing board, turning the drawings into line drawings that would photocopy better.



Achalanatha



BIG GONG

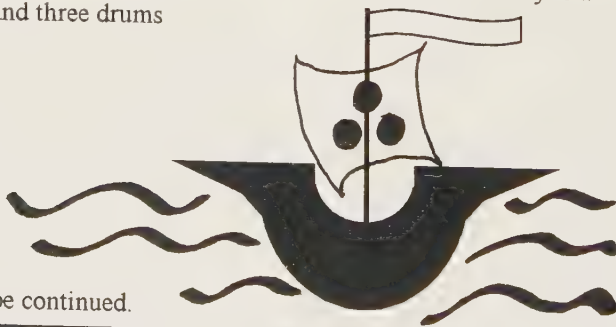
Down at the pond there is a statue of a lady. When you look at her dress you think that when the wind blows it will move. She looks like she is concentrating very hard but I don't know what on.



Avalokiteshwara
statue (near the pond)

THE SHIP & THREE DRUMS

There are many different sorts of journey and the idea of travelling is often used in Buddhism as a way of describing training. It is the **Way** and the **Path** and sometimes the Buddha's teaching is seen as like a **ship** that can carry you safely across a stormy sea to a place of peace and safety. This is one reason why the logo of Throssel Hole Priory is a ship and three drums



....to be continued.



Avalokiteshwara
statue (near the pond)



The Dawn Drum.
Painted on it is a picture of a
dragon (the defender of the faith).

NEWS

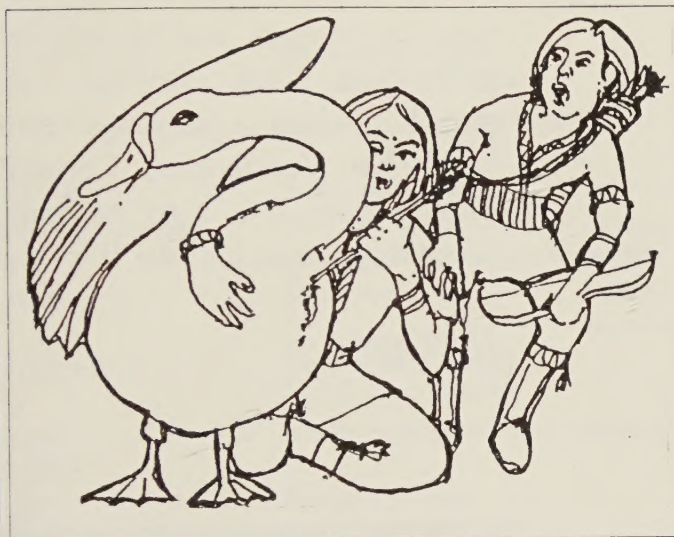
At the sunday school on the first weekend of July a funeral ceremony was held for Fido, Zoe Hurcombe's hamster. Zoe asked for the ceremony which was also attended by Julia Robinson and Rowena

Timms. The ceremony was held in the Kshtigarbha shrine, followed by a procession to the Animal Cemetery where Fido was buried.

For the ceremony an altar was prepared with some of Fido's favourite food (apple and grains) as part of the offering.



The Life of the Buddha (*Part Two*)

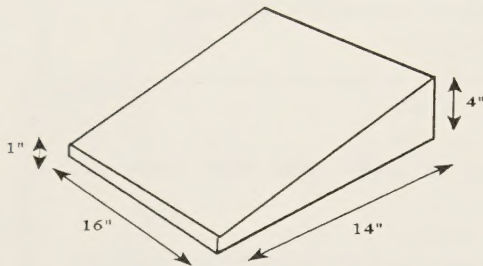


One day the young Prince Siddharta found a swan wounded by an arrow. He tried to pull out the arrow so he could help the bird. His cousin, Devadatta, ran up and said the swan was his because he had shot it. The Prince didn't want his cousin to kill the bird so they started to argue over it. As they couldn't agree, they went to one of the King's judges to get him to decide. The Judge listened to both boys and decided Prince Siddharta should have the swan saying, "It is better to give life than to take it." The Prince looked after the swan until it had healed, then let it go free.

At a Ploughing Festival, Prince Siddharta was left under a rose-apple tree whilst the grown-ups were all busy. He sat quietly with his eyes half-closed and saw that there was a quiet place beneath his thoughts and memories. The grown-ups noticed and brought his father to see. His father bowed to him out of respect but was also worried that this might mean that his son would become a holy man and teacher.



BOOKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT NEW



MEDITATION WEDGE

The bookshop is now able to offer a covered foam wedge for those who wish to meditate on a chair. The cover is made from heavy-duty black polyester-cotton and is removable for washing. The internal foam wedge is sealed into a stockingette liner which makes the wedge easier to reinsert after the cover has been washed.

The mail order price, including post and packing is £14.95.

Message from the Editor

As you will have noticed, the new A4 format of the *Journal* provides the potential for a much more varied presentation of articles and artwork. So if you have articles or poems that you think would work in the *Journal* you can also send in artwork and photographs to go with them. Line drawings rather than pencil drawings or paintings seem to work best when photocopied. Certain kinds of photographs also copy reasonably well (send them to us and we'll try them).

Thankyou

THE TRAINEE



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